

**County of Middlesex
Office of Workforce Development
One Stop Operations/WorkFirst Collaborative Meeting
550 Jersey Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 - WIA Conference Room B
December 5, 2013 – 1:30 PM**

Attendees: Jane Brady, Baden Almonor, Manuel Biagas, MaryAnn Connors, Ruth Cruz, Janice Fishbein, Carla Ghee, Sherri Goldberg, Sharon Hartman, Adrienne Keaton, Dawn Lystad, Leonor Esculne-Mamroud, Miriam Ruiz, Sandra Ruiz, John Ross, Michele Suskind, Timothy Timberlake, Linda Urbach, Fortune Valenty, Kathy Warren, Tina Rose Yuli, Jean Zwingli

Staff: Helina K. Wisniewski, Secretary

Adrienne Keaton called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm.

Review and Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 26, 2013 One Stop Operations Committee were accepted by the committee.

UI Issues – Adrienne Keaton

Mrs. Keaton stated the last week payable for any EUC (UI extension) benefits will be the week ending December 28, 2013, regardless of the number of remaining weeks left on any EUC claim. However, according to television news programs there might be a possibility of the extension continuing. Nevertheless, the volume of customers coming into the New Brunswick office is heavy due to the scheduled end of the extensions.

In general, there are usually 100 people per day coming into the New Brunswick UI office. There were 47 people that came in the day after Thanksgiving inquiring about UI issues. There has been some confusion regarding calling in versus registering on line to continue UI benefits. UI claimants can still call in every two weeks to continue their benefits. However, people who claim their benefits on line can only do so, one week at a time.

GED Update – Jane Brady/Timothy Timberlake/Fortune Valenty

Mrs. Brady indicated the New Jersey Department of Education endorsed all three GED tests for use starting January 2014. The tests range in cost from \$90 to \$120. Management at each of the testing centers has to decide which test they want to administer.

The NJDOE wishes to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the test centers, which are public institutions or governmental agencies, to administer the GED tests for calendar years 2014 through 2016. Starting in January, 2014 three vendors, Pearson VUE, Education Testing Service (ETS), and McGraw Hill will all offer tests leading to the state issued high school diploma.

Each approved test has sections that must be passed in order to earn the diploma: writing, reading, math, science and social studies. Applicants can retake the entire test or individual subtests. Students can take retests 9 times a year. No total score is needed on these tests. They have to pass each subject. Each state is required to select one test. New Jersey has selected all three. The present testing centers are going to be approved for two years until 2016. After 2016 the paper and pencil test will be eliminated and only computer based tests will remain. It will take six to seven weeks to obtain test results.

The New Jersey DOL will provide a list of approved Adult Education Test vendors. Any interested organization may submit a proposal to the NJDOE to be qualified as a test vendor. The NJDOE will audit records maintained by the

Test Centers for this project and will have access to all records and/or data regarding the project during normal business hours during the life of this project, as well as during the seven year record retention period. The requirement to take the test is the same as before – proof of residency, State ID, social security card or tax ID and the appropriate fee.

The Jewish Renaissance Foundation is applying to be a testing center.

Costs for the State of New Jersey State-Issued High School diploma are as follows:

- 1) GED Testing Service (General Education Development) – Computer-based- \$120 non-refundable – Up to 2 free retakes.
- 2) HiSET (High School Equivalency Test) - Computer or Paper - \$90 non-refundable, \$10 administration per subsection paid to test center. After 2nd retest \$25 for each retest.
- 3) TASC (Test Assessing Secondary Completion) – Computer or Paper, \$92 non –refundable, \$10 administration per subsection paid to test center. After 2nd retest \$20.40 for each retest.

Public Service Announcements – Jane Brady

We are in the process of developing English and Spanish announcements to be broadcast on the local cable stations to generate more business for training. The announcement will be placed in a local Spanish weekly newspaper in New Brunswick and Perth Amboy. A Youth announcement (English only) will also be available. This will be another attempt to find people for training.

Youth Programs Update - Jane Brady

On January 14, 2014, it will be our third GED graduation celebration at Middlesex County College in Crabiell Hall. There are over 25 youth who passed their GED since July, 2013. The students will be wearing robes at their graduation. Sherri Goldberg from Jewish Renaissance Foundation mentioned she has about 25 robes that she can lend to us for the student graduation.

The GED Prep program located at the YMCA in Perth Amboy will be relocated as of January 2, 2014 to the Middlesex County College Perth Amboy Campus. They have a larger space with computers and it will be a great college environment for the students. There is a Youth Program at the Edison campus. The GED Prep program in Carteret will stay where it is.

We are struggling with the youth enrollments in some of our programs which we are accustomed to when working with out-of-school youth. We have a 40 hour orientation for the youth and we are adding a third week for computer training.

Our New Brunswick One Stop Youth Program was moved near the entrance of the lobby at 550 Jersey Avenue. The office and classroom is very spacious and accommodating.

WorkFirst Update – John Ross

Middlesex County will cease providing transportation through the Middlesex County Area-Wide Transportation (MCAT) effective 12-31-13. The Transportation Broker hired through Transportation Block Grant funds will be transferred to the Office of Workforce Development effective 12-15-13. The Office of Workforce Development will assume responsibility for the Agreement with the Vendor that provides for the shared ride services effective 1-1-14. The Office of Workforce Development will continue to pursue additional transportation funding for TANF clients to supplement funds drawn from the Transportation Block Grant.

Middlesex County will no longer assume the costs of transportation of General Assistance clients through the shared ride system. All efforts to develop a stream of funding for this service from the State have been unsuccessful. With declining resources for providing transportation in the County, this service was not prioritized in comparison to the shuttles that serve a much broader segment of the County's population. General Assistance clients may continue to utilize the shuttles and receive funds for independent transportation and mass transit assistance through the Board of Social Services. The Transportation Broker will continue to offer assistance with options for mass transit for this population.

The most recent TANF Participation Report for the month of October indicates a slight improvement in the participation of TANF clients in required WFNJ Activities. A combination of initiatives by WFNJ Staff at both the Board of Social Services and the One Stop Career Centers will continue to be conducted with the expectation of continued improvement.

A competitive Request for Proposals is expected to be released by the middle of February, 2014 for the Work First Activities in Middlesex County for the next Program Year (PY'14) which commences on July 1, 2014 and concludes on June 30, 2015.

Luz Pino, a Case Manager (TANF) at the Perth Amboy One Stop will be on leave due to the expected arrival of her first child. A temporary replacement has been hired and is in training with Luz, so there is not expected to be an interruption of service to her caseload.

Open Discussion/Other Business

- Jane Brady – Julie Piano, New Brunswick Career Development Services Supervisor, will be returning to work part-time on January 6, 2014. Unfortunately, she had a brain aneurism in September.

We finally have an agreement with Brookdale Community College and Raritan Valley Community College. RVCC will make two courses available to us-- auto mechanics and cosmetology.

Patti Seip, WIB Executive Coordinator is retiring today.

- Mary Ann Connors – The MCC Embroidery Machine Operations training will take place at Vantage Custom Classics, Inc.(also known as Vantage Apparel) located at 100 Vantage Drive, Avenel, NJ 07001 The hands-on program will run 30 hours per week for 12 consecutive weeks from January 13, 2014 to April 4, 2014 from 5:00 pm – 11:00 pm. A mandatory orientation will take place on December 11, 2013 from 4:30 pm – 7:00 pm. The company is looking for individuals (Eastern European, mostly Polish population) to be trained at their company by an instructor. The candidate will take a manual dexterity test that includes threading a needle, test for color blindness and fastening an embroidery hoop around fabric.

Adjournment

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 27, 2014, 2014 at 1:30pm at the One Stop Career Center, 550 Jersey Avenue, WIA Conference Room B. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm.

Information/Handout Distributed to Members

- Timothy Timberlake - GED Update

01/13/14